

NUTRIENT AND FOOD GROUP ANALYSIS OF USDA FOODS IN FIVE OF ITS FOOD AND NUTRITION PROGRAMS - 2014 (SUMMARY)

Background

Through its food distribution programs, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) purchases a variety of fresh and shelf-stable fruit, vegetable, meat, dairy, grain, and oil products for distribution directly to income-eligible households or for use in congregate feeding programs. These foods, also known as USDA Foods, help Americans gain access to nutritious foods while supporting American agriculture. USDA Foods help supplement the diets of:

- children participating in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP),
- children and adults participating in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP),
- income-eligible elderly people participating in the Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP),
- income-eligible Native Americans participating in the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR), and
- income-eligible individuals seeking assistance from food pantries and soup kitchens participating in The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP).

This purpose of this report is to update the nutrient analyses from the 2012 *Nutrient and MyPyramid Analysis of USDA Foods in Five of Its Food and Nutrition Programs* report, which was based on Fiscal Year (FY) 2009 data. This updated report contains nutrient and food group analyses of the USDA Foods distributed through CACFP, CSFP, FDPIR, and TEFAP in Fiscal Year (FY) 2014 and NSLP in School Year (SY) 2013-2014 (post-Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act implementation).

Data and Methods

The study was conducted at two levels. The first level examined the nutrient and food group content of the USDA Foods *offered* to State and local administering agencies in FY 2014. The

second level assessed the nutrient and food group content of the USDA Foods selected by administering agencies and participants (i.e., foods *delivered* to those groups). For NSLP, CSFP, and FDPIR, the study also includes a participant-level nutrient analysis.

Representative USDA Foods profiles were created for NSLP, CACFP, CSFP, FDPIR, and TEFAP using the records of the foods available and distributed and data contained in these nutrient and food group databases:

- USDA Food and Nutrient Database for Dietary Studies 2011-12 (FNDDS11-12),
- USDA National Nutrient Database for Standard Reference, release 26 (SR26), and
- USDA Food Patterns Equivalents Database 2011-2012 (FPED11-12).

The analysis compares the USDA Foods profiles to the recommended dietary requirements of a representative program participant under each of several nutrient and food group standards. These standards include the Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion's Healthy Eating Index (HEI) scores under the HEI-2005 and the HEI-2010 scoring systems for each program's food package, the USDA Food Patterns, the Institute of Medicine's Dietary Reference Intakes, the USDA Thrifty Food Plan dietary standards, the USDA Food Patterns developed for the 2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans, and the Nutrition Standards in NSLP.

Key Findings

National School Lunch Program

Schools *select* from a wide variety of USDA Foods to help meet NSLP nutrient and meal pattern requirements for school-aged children. USDA Foods account for 15 to 20 percent of all foods served during lunch.

- **USDA Foods as *offered* provided over 100 percent of school meal pattern requirements for total and whole grains.**
- **USDA Foods *selected* by schools accounted for 54 percent of the minimum number of**

servings of protein and 28 percent of the minimum number of vegetable servings.

Child and Adult Care Food Program

CACFP centers, like schools, *select* from a wide variety of USDA Foods that help them meet regulatory meal pattern requirements.

- **CACFP centers *selected* more vegetables, 40 percent by weight, than any other group of USDA Foods.** Fruit (29 percent by weight), meat (19 percent), and cheese (10 percent) were also popular choices.

Commodity Supplemental Food Program

CSFP delivers individual food packages to low-income adults age 60 and older that provide a balanced mix of USDA Foods to supplement the diets of program participants.

- **As *offered* and as *delivered*, CSFP packages contained about one-quarter (22 percent) of total energy needs.** As *offered* and as *delivered*, CSFP packages for seniors contained one-third or more of the recommended Dietary Reference Intakes (DRI) for several nutrients, including protein, calcium, iron, vitamins A and C, and several B vitamins.

Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations

FDPIR provides nutritionally balanced household food packages to eligible participants as an alternative to Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits.

- **FDPIR *offered* and *delivered* at least 100 percent of the DRI recommendations for protein, carbohydrates, vitamin A and C, several B vitamins, and iron.** As *offered*, FDPIR packages provided 95 percent of participants' energy needs. As *delivered*, FDPIR packages provided participants with most (84 percent) of their energy needs.

The Emergency Food Assistance Program

TEFAP delivers USDA Foods to States for distribution to organizations that serve individuals and households in need of assistance.

- **Of the foods that were *offered* to TEFAP sites, fruit and juice were the biggest contributors at 18 and 24 percent.** Measured by weight and including bonus foods, TEFAP sites *received* more fruit (20 percent) and juice (20 percent) than any other group of USDA Foods.

Healthy Eating Index

FDPIR and CSFP provide nutritionally balanced food packages to program participants. USDA Foods offered and delivered through these programs include a broad mix of fruits, vegetables, grains, dairy, and protein products. HEI-2010 scores for these programs reflect that balance. FDPIR and CSFP packages achieved an HEI-2010 score of 73 and 83.6, as *delivered*, in FY 2014. HEI-2010 scores for foods *delivered* are higher than average HEI-2010 scores for *dietary intakes* of the average American (59) for the years 2011-2012.

Schools and institutions participating in NSLP, CACFP, and TEFAP select USDA Foods to fill their needs for specific products and tend to draw from all of the food groups offered by USDA. USDA Foods *delivered* through NSLP achieved an HEI-2010 score of 81.2 and USDA Foods *delivered* through CACFP scored 76.6. The HEI-2010 score for USDA Foods distributed through TEFAP was 85.5 in FY 2014. HEI-2010 scores for foods *offered* and *delivered* through all 3 programs are higher than average HEI-2010 scores for *dietary intakes* of children (55) and adults (59) for the years 2011-2012.

Reflecting changes in the 2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans, the HEI-2010 scoring system differs from the HEI-2005 scoring system. Figure 1 compares FY 2009 and FY 2014 scores for USDA Foods using the HEI-2005 system for comparison purposes (higher scores are bold).

Figure 1: HEI-2005 Score Comparisons

	Offered		Delivered	
	FY 2009	FY 2014	FY 2009	FY 2014
CACFP	63.6	75.5	68.5	71.2
CSFP	81.5	83.6	76.6	85.2
FDPIR	88.3	88.1	85.2	86.5
NSLP	68.8	72.6	72.4	76.7
TEFAP*	79.6	84.0	88.9	86.2

* Includes Bonus Foods

For More Information

U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service, Office of Policy Support, "Nutrient and Food Group Analysis of USDA Foods in Five of Its Food and Nutrition Programs" by Thea Zimmerman, Brenda Sun, Sujata Dixit-Joshi. Project Officer Jinee Burdug. Alexandria, VA: February 2016. Available at: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/ops/food-distribution-studies>.